

## TRIBUTE TO TOM COMFORT

**HON. TOM LATHAM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2008*

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Tom Comfort, principal of Emerson Elementary School in Indianola, Iowa, on the occasion of his retirement. I also want to express my appreciation for Tom's dedication and commitment to the youth of Iowa.

For the past 35 years Mr. Comfort has contributed his time and talents to improving lives through education and mentoring. Tom began as a student teacher in the school district in 1972. He later taught second grade at Emerson for over 20 years and worked 5 years in administration before becoming principal. Mr. Comfort is well-known for his natural ability to connect with young students, parents, and fellow educators. His guidance, sense of humor, and many unique abilities including his storytelling, will certainly be missed by all at Emerson Elementary, as is evidenced by art projects organized by teachers and students at every grade level in his honor.

Mr. Comfort has made a lasting impact on the many students and teachers he has worked with over his career. I consider it an honor to represent Tom in the United States Congress, and I know my colleagues join me in wishing him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

## ESTABLISHING A CONGRESS 2012 COMMISSION

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2008*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation which will continue my efforts of previous Congresses to work toward better representation for our constituents. My legislation will form a commission to examine how we, the people, may be best served by our representational democracy. This commission would analyze the current size of the membership of the House of Representatives and examine alternatives to the current method of electing Representatives.

Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Rules Legislative and Budget Subcommittee, I find it absolutely necessary to continually update our mechanisms for representation and governance to best serve those constituents who have trusted us with representing them.

The legislation I offer today will counter the unfortunate truth that, ironically, our land of the free is one of the most under-representative democracies in the world. When considering elected federal representation per capita, many other countries throughout the world have parliaments which can more closely serve their constituents. Smaller ratios of elected officials to constituents allow for better engagement to more effectively address the needs of their districts. As a country that holds itself up as the standard bearer for the democratic process, we must be critical of our own standards to guarantee that we continue to give all citizens an equal and meaningful voice in our government.

We have encountered an electoral crisis in recent years with low voter turnout and diminishing faith in the effectiveness of our electoral process. However, the energy of this current election cycle has exponentially increased voter registration. We owe it to our constituents to ensure that this increase in civic engagement is met with the most effective mechanism of representation possible. The Commission proposed in the legislation I introduce today will meet that need by determining the best way to ensure maximum participation in this great democracy by every American citizen.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and look forward to its expedient passage.

## HONORING DERRICK GREGG

**HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2008*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor 15-year-old Derrick Gregg from Highland, Illinois. For his Eagle Scout badge project, Derrick chose to raise funds for building a helipad in Highland.

The \$88,000 helipad that Derrick has raised the money to build is fully heated. Additionally, it also has radio controlled lighting. As the nearest trauma center to Highland is about 40 miles away, this landing pad will be used when critical patients need to be transported by helicopter.

I congratulate Derrick for his efforts which will serve his community well. I wish him the best as he finishes this project and completes his Eagle Scout requirements.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2008*

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, June 25, 2008, I was not present for recorded votes due to a funeral in Florida that I attended. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way: rollcall No. 449—"no"; rollcall No. 450—"no"; rollcall No. 451—"no"; rollcall No. 452—"no"; rollcall No. 453—"no"; rollcall No. 454—"aye"; rollcall No. 455—"no"; rollcall No. 456—"aye"; rollcall No. 457—"no"; rollcall No. 458—"no"; rollcall No. 459—"no"; rollcall No. 460—"aye"; rollcall No. 461—"aye."

## RECOGNIZING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, DISASTER RECOVERY AND RELIEF EFFORTS IN RANDOLPH COUNTY

**HON. MIKE PENCE**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2008*

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and recognize the extraordinary contributions of emergency management, disaster response, and recovery personnel as

well as elected officials and community leaders in my district which was devastated by the recent severe weather in Indiana.

I wish particularly to honor the Board of Commissioners and County Council, as well as these outstanding individuals in Randolph County:

Rick Brown, Director, Emergency Management Agency

Jay Harris, Sheriff

Steven Croyle, Mayor, City of Winchester

Michael Burke, Chief of Police, City of Winchester

These areas suffered greatly from severe storms and weather, creating a catastrophe of nature that inflicted injuries, destroyed property, and displaced many of our citizens. In response, these officials went above and beyond the call of duty, showing great poise while saving many lives and serving the people of their communities.

Madam Speaker, I commend these fine men and women for their tremendous dedication to the Hoosier families, businesses, farmers and communities that they serve. As Hoosiers continue to recover from Mother Nature's fury, I feel confident that the people of Randolph County will be well served by these officials.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY PREPAREDNESS, RESEARCH, AND EDUCATION PROGRAM ACT OF 2008, THE DHS PREP ACT OF 2008

**HON. AL GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2008*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, today, we live in a world where security threats have become more complex. For that reason, nurturing a field of educated and knowledgeable experts—trained and prepared to meet the security challenges before us—should be a priority of the United States Government. To accomplish this goal, opportunities within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should be made available for students to participate in programs that allow them to help develop the solutions to the security challenges that our Nation confronts. It is equally important that participating students come from diverse backgrounds and are truly representative of all the communities across our homeland.

My legislation, the Department of Homeland Security Preparedness, Research, and Education Program Act of 2008, or the DHS PREP Act of 2008, would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to carry out a program for fellowships and research to enhance domestic preparedness and the collective response to acts of terrorism, natural disasters and other emergencies.

When natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast region, infrastructure and the most basic services too many take for granted were destroyed. The Department of Homeland Security is overseeing efforts to rebuild public infrastructure in the Gulf Coast region that was devastated by natural disasters. That is why, during the first year of the fellowship, participants will undertake research specifically focused on rebuilding and recovery of the Gulf Coast.